



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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### **NOTICE:**

**There will be no  
BCWRT meeting in  
August. The next  
scheduled meeting is  
September 25, 2012**

### **Franklin Does It: Makes \$500K Goal for Battle Park Tract**

By Gregory L. Wade, CW News  
FRANKLIN, Tenn. — The Franklin's Charge (FC) preservation coalition met a May 30 deadline to raise \$500,000 to match a Civil War Trust gift of \$500,000 for the purchase of key battlefield acreage for the future Carter Cotton Gin Interpretive Park. The fundraising success was announced at a gathering of supporters.

Historians say the tract includes the Carter Cotton Gin location which, along with the Carter House just across Columbia Pike, witnessed some of the most intense fighting of the Nov. 30, 1864, Battle of Franklin. The total cost of the acquisition is \$1.85 million, to be covered with the Trust gift and matching donations along with a 2010 Tennessee Department of Transportation grant of \$960,000.

Since 2005, FC has raised over \$9 million to reclaim key parcels of lost Franklin battleground. Until that time many of the most critical acres were commercially developed as the city had experienced significant growth as a Nashville bedroom community.

FC founder and board member Robert Hicks spoke to a group of supporters and preservation activists

about the cooperation among all the partners. Franklin's Charge is made up of preservation groups as diverse as the African American Heritage Society to the Harpeth River Watershed Association, he noted.

Hicks said, "We went from five people brainstorming about preservation on a front porch to the organization we are today." In 2005 FC was successful saving what is now known as the Eastern Flank when it coordinated a fund-raising effort to pay \$5 million for what was then an 18-hole golf course.

Various entities, including the City of Franklin and Civil War Trust, participated in that project which is now evolving into an interpreted battle field park.

Since then Franklin's Charge, often in partnership with the Trust, continues to seek opportunities to "reclaim" the battlefield.

"Once again I stand in awe of the incredible passion for preservation present today in Franklin, Tennessee," said Civil War Trust President James Lighthizer.

Some 125 individuals made \$1,000 donations, right up to the May 30 deadline, according to FC board member Mary Pearce. Significant donations included \$200,000 from Calvin and Marilyn Lehew and a major contribution from Rod and Kay Heller who made acquisition of the Eastern Flank battlefield possible in 2005.

Many of those present at the announcement are even more excited about what this latest effort could spur. "I have been all over the country, to just about all the battlefields," said Civil War enthusiast Sam Whitson, "and the potential here at Franklin is at the top."

Lighthizer echoed those thoughts. "We at the Civil War Trust are confident that their [FC] successes are far from over," he said, noting the Trust will "remain proud to partner with them on projects yet to come."

Local preservationists believe as the pieces come together, there will indeed be more projects in the future.

Four parcels will comprise the new park. FC purchased a 2-acre plot with a house, since removed, in 2008 for \$960,000. The debt on that parcel was retired last year. Two other parcels that will be part of the park are a house the Heritage Foundation of Franklin purchased in the late 1990s on the site of the Carter's original cotton gin and a parcel the Civil War Trust bought that will be conveyed to Franklin's Charge.

The newest property is occupied by a strip center with a Domino's Pizza. It is across the street from the site of another pizzeria that the city purchased in 2005 and demolished to create a park in 2005.

The total costs for the entire gin-related properties will be in excess of \$3 million, according to FC.

Battle of Franklin Trust Chief Operating Officer Eric Jacobson told the gathering this "hallowed ground" is more than about the past, but about the future.

"The completion of the park will provide future Americans the opportunity to see why this battle is so important," said Jacobson. People will not have to "imagine" what it must have been like when the Domino's strip is removed and the gin is rebuilt. "They will not have to dream it, they can see it," he said.

As far as the next steps for the park's development, FC board member Julian Bibb said there are some details to tie down, but thanks to the patience of the strip center owners



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Donnie and Tim Cameron, "we are about there."

"We have already begun the actual planning of a replica cotton gin based on exact records left by the Carter family," Bibb said.

When completed the multi-acre park may include interpretive earthworks based on meticulous research by local historians and archeological studies. It was these works that protected the Federal lines when the Army of Tennessee made its disastrous two-mile charge that nearly broke the lines.

The Confederates lost about 2,000 men killed. Many of their veteran commanders, including six generals, were killed or mortally wounded.

"The remarkable people at Franklin's Charge have risen to every challenge presented to them," said Lighthizer, "reclaiming historic ground that conventional wisdom had given up for lost."

To learn more visit [www.franklinscharge.com](http://www.franklinscharge.com)

### With help from Macy's, Civil War balloon gets off the ground

Buffalonews.com, July 4, 2012

MUMFORD - As the world's first replica of a manned Civil War balloon swayed gently in a breeze Tuesday, a man who trekked about 1,100 miles from Nebraska to witness the occasion watched with pride.

Terry D. Lowe is a descendant of a Civil War balloonist who helped shape modern-day military aviation and war reconnaissance communications. He is the great-great-grand-nephew of Thaddeus Lowe, founder of the Union Army Balloon Corps, who convinced President Abraham Lincoln that balloons could be used to spy on

enemy troop movements, plot maps and for other military strategies.

He gave a demonstration in Washington, D.C., becoming the first person to bring a telegraph key operator into the balloon. Lowe gave the White House an aerial description of the nation's capital. Lincoln was impressed, said the innovator's descendant.

"They took the balloon tethered, and walked [Lowe] to the White House where he met with Abraham Lincoln, spent the night there and convinced him at that point that ballooning needed to be in the military," Lowe said

Officials at Genesee Country Village & Museum decided that replicating a Civil War balloon that had been christened Intrepid would be an ideal way to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the war.

Peter Arnold, the museum's president and chief executive officer, said the \$400,000 project, which has been partially offset by numerous donations, has triggered intense interest.

Starting today and continuing into October, visitors will be invited to board the tethered balloon when weather permits and float several hundred feet above the picturesque landscape, getting a taste of what the first military pilots experienced a century-and-a-half earlier. The cost of 15-minute flights is \$10 for museum members and \$15 for non-members, charges that are in addition to general admission.

The museum, located just east of Le Roy, bills itself as the state's largest living history museum, maintaining the third-largest inventory of historic buildings in the nation.

Chuck LeCount, the museum's senior director of programs and collections, commanded the balloon on a series

of test flights Tuesday, giving a series of lively mini-history lessons during the brief excursions. He said the Civil War balloons played important roles in plotting military maneuvers.

"On occasion, they were also directing artillery fire," LeCount said.

While troops on the ground occasionally shot at the balloons, Civil War historians said the vessels were too high in the air to be vulnerable to the weapons of the day.



Crew member Ed Girard of Avon helps steady Intrepid, a helium replica of a hydrogen balloon used by the Union Army in the Civil War, as it lands at the Genesee Country Village and Museum in Mumford. Photo by Derek Gee/ Buffalo News

Since the museum first announced the balloon project in February, it has attracted widespread attention from Civil War buffs, aviation enthusiasts and educators. Museum officials said they're optimistic that the Intrepid will be one of the region's major tourist draws this summer.

There is one fundamental difference between the replica and the balloons that sailed the skies during the Civil War. The original balloons used hydrogen, which was generated using acid and iron filings. The modern-day Intrepid uses helium.

This distinction almost grounded the balloon, given the fact that there is a nationwide helium shortage. Folks who have floated the likes of Shrek, Kung Fu Panda and Barney the Dinosaur across Manhattan over the decades came to the rescue.



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

"With the Thanksgiving Day Parade, we had the helium on hand," said Bill Kearns, who manages a Macy's store in Rochester. "We were able to make the donation of 50,000 cubic feet [of helium] to make today happen."

The balloon launch site is adjacent to a Civil War encampment where re-enactors help visitors get a glimpse of what a soldier's life was like back in the 1860s.

Lowe, a systems coordinator for the city of Lincoln, Neb., said he wished that "Uncle Thadd" could have witnessed Tuesday's spectacle, especially given the fact balloons were not widely accepted by the military in the mid-1800s. "I can just imagine what Thaddeus would be thinking right now, being vindicated all these years later," he said.

### **Hunley Lantern's Surprises: Lens Is Not Blue, Body Was Fragile**

By Scott C. Boyd, (*July 2012 Civil War News*)

CHARLESTON, S.C. – The famous lantern of the Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley, which is said to have signaled the vessel's successful attack on the USS Housatonic, has completed conservation.

One surprising discovery is that the one 3-inch diameter lens is clear, despite accounts that the submarine flashed a blue light signal after its history-making attack as the first submarine to sink an enemy vessel in combat on Feb. 17, 1864.

The lantern was displayed for the media on April 19. It is not on public display at this time, according to Friends of the Hunley Executive Director Kellen Correia.

The lantern was found during excavation of the submarine's

interior, chief conservator Paul Mardikian said in an interview. It was fused by corrosion to the vessel's hull.

The lantern was an "extremely inexpensive and easily available" type, Mardikian said. Ships would have normally had a sturdier lantern, made of brass, he said.

The only brass object found in the Hunley, however, was the oil can, according to Mardikian. There were also some buttons from the crew's clothing and parts of the sub's compass that were brass.

The lantern body was made of tin-plated iron, "the most fragile material you could have on a boat" due to the corrosive power of seawater, according to Mardikian.

Tin-plated iron is "fragile, unstable and corrodible," he said.

With the Hunley's lantern, "you're looking at a ghost artifact," he said. "It was corroded through, filled with sediment, and extremely heavy, with a massive lens. The only dense areas were where the solder was."

Mardikian said the lantern had the "consistency of a biscuit" and could not be handled unless there were some kind of backing material inside, or the fragile metal would crumble.

The total treatment time for the lantern was two years. The manual work needed to remove the concretion totaled about three weeks, requiring a scalpel used under a microscope to lift off the concretion.

Mardikian said, "The lantern is probably the most complex artifact ever conserved for the Hunley."

The conserved lantern is not "restored," he noted. A large hole in the lantern was covered with a strong, synthetic fabric to give it "a natural, normal appearance."

"The goal was to make it appealing to the viewer without making it tell a lie,"

he said. "You want to know what is original and what's not when you look at it."



At left is the famous lantern as it was found during excavation of the H.L. Hunley's interior. It had to be detached from the side of the hull to which it was fused due to corrosion. At right is how it looks after two years of conservation and removal of concretion. (Friends of the Hunley)

Although Mardikian believes the lantern was an inexpensive, common type for the era, he has not found anything "strictly similar" to it. Many people have contacted him to claim they have a lantern just like it, but none have convinced him.

"The top of the lantern – the baffle – is particularly different from what you typically find," he said.

Regarding the lens color, Mardikian said he can only judge based on what he sees. "I never found evidence of anything 'blue' about it. Based on the material evidence, there is nothing 'blue' about the object."

He said "blue light" may refer to a signaling technique common at the time rather than to the color of the light. He used the analogy of French fries. "There's nothing 'French' about them," the native of France said.

"I would have loved to see something blue, but I deliver what I find."

The next conservation projects include the aft hatch, grapnel anchor and compass. Mardikian said plans for 2013 include de-concreting the spar that held the sub's torpedo.

Discovered underwater in 1995 just outside the mouth of Charleston Harbor, the 40-foot-long Hunley has been at the Warren Lasch Conservation Center at the former





## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

navy base in North Charleston since it was recovered intact from the sea on Aug. 8, 2000.

In 2004, the remains of the eight men discovered when the sub's interior was excavated were buried with full honors at Charleston's Magnolia Cemetery.

### Federal Grants Given To Six Civil War Battlefields

WASHINGTON – The National Park Service (NPS) recently awarded more than \$3.8 million in matching grants for land acquisition at six Civil War battlefields through easements or fee simple purchase.

Grants were awarded at Cross Keys, Tom's Brook and Buckland Mills, Virginia; Mill Springs, Kentucky; South Mountain, Maryland; and Bentonville, North Carolina

The grants were made from the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) to help states and communities acquire and preserve threatened Civil War battlefield land outside national park boundaries. Priority was given to battlefields listed in the NPS's Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields.

The grantees and awards are:

- Pulaski County, Ky., Mill Springs Battlefield, Gladstone Tract, fee simple, \$90,800.

- Maryland Department of Natural Resources, South Mountain Battlefield, Tieman Tract, fee simple, \$149,000.

- North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Bentonville Battlefield, Lawyers Mutual Tract, fee simple, \$45,325.

- Fauquier County, Va., Buckland Mills Battlefield: Bishop's Run Tract, easement, \$2,300,000; Ted's Tack

Shack Tract, two easements, \$804,864 and \$245,196.

- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Cross Keys Battlefield, Miller Tract, easement, \$181,125.

- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Tom's Brook Battlefield, Kibler Tract, easement, \$25,000.

The grant funds were made available under the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act of 2011 (Public Law 112-10) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-74), which appropriated a combined \$17,967,600 for the Civil War battlefield land acquisition grants program.

The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Civil War Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants are awarded through a competitive process to units of state and local governments or their private non-profit partners. Each grant requires a dollar-for-dollar non-federal match. Applications for the balance of the funds are accepted at any time.

### Preservationists see new hope for keeping alive history of Battle of Westport

By BRIAN BURNES, Kansas City Star, July 02, 2012

At the Big Blue Battlefield just north of Swope Park, local historian Joelouis Mattox recently wore a black officer's infantry hat and held a black serviceman's artillery hat.

It took Union troops about six hours to control Bloody Hill during the October 1864 Battle of Westport.

It's taken Dan Smith and other officers of the Monnett Battle of Westport Fund about six years to

acquire much of the surrounding area in the Big Blue Battlefield, just north of Swope Park. They secured three more acres last week.

Fund members, who have worked since 1975 to preserve and mark Civil War-related locations across Kansas City, intend to demolish the warehouse that stands on the site. They also hope to acquire several other parcels near it and demolish the buildings that belonged to an industrial park on the old battlefield since the 1950s.

The fund now controls 27 of the approximately 40 acres of the flood plain district that both Union and Confederate soldiers referred to as "The Meadow" during the largest Civil War battle west of the Mississippi River. The area stands just north of East 63rd Street Trafficway near the Blue River.

"I've been carrying the torch on this for a while," said Smith, a Kansas City area trial lawyer who serves as chairman of the Monnett Fund.

"But we are now on the downhill slope."

Smith and his colleagues are the latest in a line of Kansas City-area Civil War preservationists who have worked to preserve local Civil War sites in general and the Big Blue Battlefield in particular.

That battlefield was part of the larger Battle of Westport, a sprawling action that occurred over three days in October 1864 in locations ranging from Independence to what is now Loose Park just south of Brush Creek, and to south Kansas City.

The battle, a Union victory, ended any hope of a significant Confederate presence in Missouri. It involved some 30,000 soldiers, about 11,000 of whom clashed Oct. 22 and 23 on the Big Blue Battlefield.



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

The area actually was contested twice, with Confederate troops crossing the Blue River at what was known as Byram's Ford and pushing Union troops back to the west. The next day, different Union forces arrived and displaced the Confederates to the west.

Today the flood plain area, which sits just north of 63rd Street Trafficway, seems removed from the urban grid, with a line of trees obscuring the Blue River to the east and small hills that rise sharply on the west. But that didn't stop it being developed as an industrial park beginning in the 1950s.

In 1990, the secretary of the interior declared Byram's Ford to be one of the 25 most-endangered Civil War sites in the country.

Monnett Fund members had organized 15 years before that.

The fund, a nonprofit group, was named for Howard Monnett, preservationist and author of "Action Before Westport, 1864," a 1964 book on the battle.

In 1983, the fund obtained a donation from Commerce Bank of 50 acres of the Big Blue Battlefield, including the actual crossing, or ford, on the Blue River. Six years later the fund obtained the designation of the Byram's Ford Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1995, the Monnett Fund, in tandem with what is now the Civil War Trust, a national nonprofit group, donated about 100 acres of the district to the Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department.

In 2006, the fund launched its current "Saving Kansas City's Battlefield" initiative. The program is designed to reclaim the entire Byram's Ford site south of 59th Street.

"It's not hard to stand there and be able to think about what happened

there in 1864," said Shirley Christian, a Kansas City area historian who is battlefield initiative co-chairwoman.

A 1996 archaeological survey on the field yielded a "plainback" button from a federal coat — so named because it carried no manufacturing identification on its back — as well as a fired .57 caliber Enfield bullet often associated with Confederate soldiers.

"This (land acquisition) is a major step, and we want to make the whole country more aware of this battlefield," Christian said.

The restored battlefield also will represent an opportunity for Kansas City area African-American residents to grow more engaged with the ongoing Civil War 150th anniversary, said Joelouis Mattox, an area historian who also serves as a docent in the Battle of Westport Visitor Center Museum at 6601 Swope Parkway.

"The Civil War was being fought over slavery, but some people don't want to talk about being enslaved by anyone," Mattox said.

"But when they ask about black troops during the Civil War, that's an opportunity to talk about what I call 'The Black in the Blue.' African-American troops wearing federal blue uniforms during the Battle of Westport included an artillery unit, Mattox said.

### **Twelve year-old Texan promotes Civil War site preservation**

By BRIAN BURNES, Kansas City Star, July 02, 2012

Nationally recognized Civil War buff Andrew Druart of Texas paid a visit Monday to the 1864 Big Blue Battlefield near Swope Park.

On Monday a nationally honored fundraiser for Civil War battlefield preservation addressed the editorial board of The Star.

Later he stood in the Big Blue Battlefield just north of Swope Park, posing for photographs that he said will be posted on his website, through which he has raised about \$10,000 for national preservation efforts.

Then he and his dad got back in the van and headed for Civil War sites in Kansas.

Andrew Druart, 12, is on summer vacation.

"I play sports and play video games and do all the normal kid stuff," Andrew, of Austin, Texas, told editorial board members.

But this summer, he and his father, Tad Druart, are visiting Civil War sites across the Midwest. They stopped at The Star to urge more local awareness of efforts to reclaim the Big Blue Battlefield.

Andrew admires the efforts of the Monnett Battle of Westport Fund to acquire parcels in the industrial park that has occupied the battlefield area since the 1950s. He has helped raise about \$500 for the local drive to acquire property and demolish warehouses and other buildings there.

If the effort gains sufficient support, Andrew added, visitors to the Big Blue Battlefield one day could have the same transporting experience he had in Gettysburg when he and his father visited in 2009.

"We went to the Pickett's Charge area, and I could just see the Confederate troops lined up. Just seeing how well the land was preserved, you just got a real sense of the battlefield."

That's hard to do now in the Big Blue Battlefield area, he said.

"When you see the old buildings, it's hard to see the area as hallowed ground."

Andrew's friends, he said, tolerate his Civil War interests but show more



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

enthusiasm when he brings collectibles and artifacts to class. His teachers, meanwhile, have invoked a special classroom rule for him.

"Three kids have to answer a question in Social Studies before I get to," he said.

Last month Andrew traveled to Richmond, Va., to receive the first-ever Junior Preservation Leadership Award given by the Civil War Trust. Through his website, Andrew has raised about \$10,000 for the national nonprofit devoted to the preservation of endangered battlefields.

Andrew's website [civilwarkids.com](http://civilwarkids.com), includes his father's suggestions about providing parental guidance for children interested in the conflict.

Tad Druart also has monitored the response Andrew has received from some adults who maintain strong feelings about the conflict.

He's gotten some interesting emails," said Druart, who grew up in Chanute, Kan.

*Editor's note:*

*It is a slow news month this month and, for the first time, I haven't found enough to fill these pages.*

*Accordingly, I am adding an article from a few years ago that I found interesting but never had the room to post.*

### **This Custer mustered at Battle of Stones River**

MIKE WEST, Managing Editor, Murfreesboro Post. March 8, 2009

Among the Ohio troops that fought at the Battle of Stones River was one Yankee who went on to win two

George Armstrong Custer of Little Big Horn fame.

Tom was only 16, and living with his family in Ohio, when Armstrong and another brother, Nevin, went off to war. When illness waylaid Nevin, Tom sought and received permission from his parents to enlist. On Sept. 2, 1861, he joined the ranks of the 21st Ohio Infantry in Gilead, Ohio. While Nevin predicted he would be rejected, Tom told the recruiting officer he was 18 and his word was accepted. He was soon mustered in with his unit at Findlay, Ohio. The 21st Ohio was to gain great fame during the Civil War, not due to anything Tom Custer did, but because of the "Great Locomotive Chase," also called Andrew's Raid. James J. Andrews was a civilian spy for the Union Army of Ohio, who devised a raid on the Western and Atlantic Railroad in the spring of 1862.

On April 12, 1862, Andrews, another civilian, William "Bill" Campbell, and 22 volunteers from three Ohio infantry regiments dressed as civilians, hijacked a steam locomotive named The General at Big Shanty, near Kennesaw, Ga.

They headed north, destroying tracks and telegraph wires to slow pursuit and render the railroad useless for supplying the Confederate troops in Tennessee. William Allen Fuller, the conductor of the stolen train pursued the train hijackers on foot, by handcar and the locomotive, "Texas," which chased The General 51 miles in reverse. After an 87-mile chase, The General lost power just north of Ringgold, Ga.

Congressional Medal of Honor. Custer didn't participate in the raid and spent much of the spring and summer of 1862 guarding and moving Confederate prisoners of war. But Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg's movement through Tennessee and invasion of Kentucky would soon change things for the 21st Ohio, commanded by Lt. Col. James M. Neibling.

Defeated at Perryville, Bragg fell back to Murfreesboro where he transformed what was once called the Army of Mississippi into the Army of Tennessee. The Union Army was reorganized as well with the army's new commander, Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans planning the 21st Ohio's role in combat. The 21st Ohio was assigned to Col. John Miller's brigade of Brig. Gen. James S. Negley's Division and was placed in the Union center commanded by Gen. George H. Thomas. The brigade marched up the Nashville Pike and formed up to the right of Brig. Gen. Thomas L. Crittenden, who commanded the left wing of the Union army. It was Rosecrans' plan to let Crittenden lead the attack on the Confederate left, but Bragg struck first at daylight, driving the Union left in a pinwheel action. As the Union left collapsed, the 21st Ohio was moved up and into a cornfield where they opened fire on the advancing Confederates, but with Brig. Gen. Phil Sheridan's troops fighting in retreat on their left, Neibling had to move his men back. The 21st, and other units, anchored Sheridan's deliberate retreat under

Congressional Medals of Honor. His last name was a famous one, Custer. He was Thomas Ward Custer, the younger brother of

Andrews and a number of the raiders were captured and executed. Several of the soldiers became the first Americans to receive the

fire near what is known now as Van Cleve Lane following the bitter fighting in the Slaughter Pen area. Ultimately, the Ohio troops formed





## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

part of Rosecrans final line of defense near the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad and next to the Chicago Board of Trade artillery battery.

The 21st saw action again on Jan. 2, 1863 on the second day of Stones River. The 21st was ordered to ford icy Stones River and to end the threat posed by Gen. John C. Breckinridge's charge.

Breckinridge was repulsed by Union infantry and heavy artillery fire from Mendenhall's 52-cannon battery overlooking McFadden's Ford. Stones River was over for the 21st Ohio, with 24 killed, 109 wounded and 26 missing.

Custer was reassigned as an escort "orderly" for General Negley following the battle. This was a hazardous, horseback assignment that involved scouting enemy positions and transporting important messages during the heat of a battle in unfamiliar territory in addition to serving as security for Negley.

The young horseman got caught up the chaos that was Chickamauga. Negley, suffering from an illness, pulled out of the fight and retreated to Rossville. A subsequent inquiry cleared Negley, but Custer missed out on the action, which found his old regiment, the 21st involved in the terrible fighting at Snodgrass Hill. With Negley relieved of duty, Custer served as an orderly at Chattanooga and Missionary Ridge with Gen. U.S. Grant and with Maj. Gen. John Palmer during the Atlanta Campaign. He also served escort duties with Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, Maj. Gen. Jefferson C. Davis and Maj. Gen. William S. Sherman. Custer was promoted to corporal while with Sherman where he received news from his brother Armstrong. Tom mustered out of the

Union Army of the Tennessee in October 1864 and accepted a commission as a first lieutenant with Company B of the 6th Michigan Cavalry. He became his brother's aide-de-camp and accompanied him throughout the last year of the war. Just barely 20 years old, Custer distinguished himself by winning successively the brevets of captain, major and lieutenant colonel.



Capt. Tom Custer poses with his two Medals of Honor

He was awarded two Medals of Honor for capturing Confederate regimental flags (at Namozine Church on April 3, 1865, and again at Saylor's Creek on April 6, 1865). He was one of only four soldiers or sailors to receive the dual honor during the Civil War, and one of just 19 in history.

An eyewitness account at Saylor's Creek said:

"Custer crossed the line of temporary works on the flank of the road, where his unit was confronted by a supporting battle-line. In the second line he wrested the colors from an enemy color bearer. Advancing on another standard he received a shot

in the face, which knocked him back on his horse. Despite his wounds, he continued his assault on the color bearer who began to fall from wounds he had also received. As he fell, the wounded Lieutenant Custer reached out to grasp this second standard of colors, bearing both off in triumph." Following the Civil War, both Custer brothers continued to serve with the U.S. Army, but at lesser ranks. Named a brigadier general of volunteers at age 23, Armstrong had risen to the rank of major general by the end of the war. His rank reverted to lieutenant colonel of the 7th Cavalry, a fact that rankled him. Tom was wounded in the Washita campaign of the Indian Wars in 1868 and participated in the Yellowstone Expedition of 1873, where he fought in the Battle of Honsinger Bluff and the Black Hills Expedition of 1874. In 1874, at Standing Rock Agency, Custer participated in the arrest of the Lakota Rain-in-the-Face for the 1873 murder of Dr. John Honsinger. In 1875 he was promoted to captain and given command of Co. C of the 7th Cavalry, but during the Little Bighorn campaign, he served once more as an aide-de-camp to his brother. Lt. Henry Harrington actually led Co. C during the Custers' last battle.

Both Tom and Armstrong Custer were killed at Little Bighorn, along with a third brother, Boston Custer, and other family members and friends.

Tom's body was heavily mutilated and was only identifiable by a tattoo of his initials. It was widely rumored that Rain-in-the-Face, who had escaped from captivity and was a participant at the Little Bighorn, had cut out Tom Custer's heart as revenge.

Initially buried on the battlefield,



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## **THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER**

Tom's body was exhumed and reburied at Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery.